THE CATECHISM
OF THE
ORTHODOX EASTERN CHURCH.

IGNATIUS MOSCHAKE.

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The catechism of the
Orthodox Eastern Church

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BY

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PREFACE OF TRACT COMMITTEE.

The following work having been submitted to the S.P.C.K. for publication, the Tract Committee—in consideration of the growing interest among Anglican Churchmen both at home and abroad in the condition of our fellow-Christians in the Ancient Eastern Churches—have thought it well to publish it, as an authentic document showing what is the practical contemporary religious teaching, sanctioned by both the ecclesiastical and civil authorities, in that branch of the Orthodox Eastern Church which exists in the kingdom of Greece.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE translation of this brief* Catechism has been to me a work of great interest and instruction.

The edition in question was published in Athens in 1888, and it is accompanied by two warrants, one being the imprimatur of the Sacred Synod, and the other a warrant from the Bureau of Religion and Public Education, enjoining its sole use in the schools for a period of four years.

A most suggestive clause in the title-page is also worthy of mention, in which it is stated that "The Catechism obtained the prize in the last examination of educational books, and is the only one to be used in the schools

* A much enlarged edition was issued in 1890, with the imprimatur of the Sacred Synod, and "in accordance with the programme of the 'Bureau of Education and Religion,' for use in schools and female seminaries in Greece."

of either sex, whether public, municipal, or private."

My warm thanks are due to Mademoiselle Ponseta of Alexandria, for her very kind and complete revision of the translation.

ARTHUR BAKER, M.A.,
Chaplain Royal Navy.

Volo, February 16, 1894.

INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. The Catechism.

The term "Catechism" includes all that is to be taught concerning the Christian religion. In order that we may have a full understanding as to what the Christian religion is, it is necessary that we should learn what religion is in general.

§ 2. What is Religion?

Religion is the communion of man with God, and the relation of man towards God. Religion, which is also called piety, consists in believing in God, in fearing Him, and in loving Him, and in hoping in Him. Religion is not simply knowledge, but has its roots in the heart. True religion is shown by good works: "Show me thy faith by thy works" (St. James ii. 10).

§ 3. What is Revelation?

Revelation is the manifestation of God, and of His will toward men. God is revealed to

us, first, through nature. Every man who observes nature, and sees the greatness, the fitness, and the harmony of the world, finds it impossible not to admit the existence of some being who created the world. Just as, when we see a beautiful work, we admit of necessity the existence of a skilled workman, so, when we look upon nature's fair and wondrous handiwork, we admit of necessity the existence of its Creator: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork" (Ps. xix. 1).

God is revealed to us, secondly, through the conscience. When we do what is good, our conscience commends us; when we do what is evil our conscience condemns us: and this fact bears witness that there is a God, Who, by means of the conscience, points out to us the good that we must do, and the evil that we must avoid, and warns us beforehand that He will reward the good, but the evil He will punish.

The revelation which is made to us through nature and the conscience is styled the general or natural revelation. Above all, God revealed Himself to us through the Patriarchs, through Moses, and through the Prophets, and especially through His own Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. And this revelation is styled generally the Historic Revelation.

§ 4. Wherein is the Revelation chiefly contained?

The Revelation is contained chiefly in those sacred writings which we call Holy Scripture. Holy Scripture is divided into the Old Testament, and the New Testament; and the Old Testament contains all that God revealed to us through the Patriarchs, through Moses, and through the Prophets; and the New Testament all that God revealed to us through Jesus Christ and His Apostles. And the books of the Old Testament were for the most part written in Hebrew, but the books of the New Testament were written in Greek.

§ 5. Division of the Catechism.

All that is contained at length in Holy Scripture is gathered into the Creed and the Ten Commandments. The Creed was drawn up at the first two General Councils, that of Nicea in A.D. 325, and that of Constantinople in A.D. 381, and teaches us all that we ought to *believe*. But the Ten Commandments were given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai, and they teach us all that we ought to *do*. For this reason the Catechism is divided into two parts, of which the first explains the Creed, and is called *dogmatical*, because it contains the dogmas of our faith—that is, all that we

ought to believe: but the second explains the Ten Commandments, and is called *ethical*, because it deals with Christian morality—in fact, all that we ought to do.

The Creed is contained in twelve articles, which are as follows:—

1. I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

2. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, Light of light, very God of very God; begotten, not made; of one substance with the Father; by Whom all things were made;

3. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, and was made man.

4. And was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried,

5. And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures,

6. And ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father,

7. And He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end.

8. And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, the Giver of life, Who proceedeth from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spake by the Prophets.

9. I believe in One Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.

10. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins.

11. I look for the resurrection of the dead.

12. And the life of the world to come. Amen.

PART I.

DOGMATICAL.

I. CONCERNING GOD.

§ 6. The First Article of the Creed, and the Meaning thereof.

"I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, the Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible."

This first article of the Creed teaches us that there exists one only God, in Whose existence we ought to have unshaken confidence, in order that we may believe on Him. He, in His almighty power, made all things, both the visible and the invisible. And under the visible are contained all things that we see, the earth, the heavenly bodies, man, and all the natural bodies in general; but under the invisible are contained the Heavenly spirits, or the Angels, who are beings above man, set apart to minister to God, and of whom some that have erred and fallen away from God are called in Holy Scripture evil spirits or devils.

§ 7. The Existence of God.

The existence of God does not need any proof, because the idea of God is emplanted in every man. Nevertheless, to strengthen our faith, we give the arguments in succession. All nature proclaims the existence of God; because apart from God nature is not explained, and the existence of the world remains an incomprehensible enigma. There can be no effect without a cause; but the world is an effect, because the existences which make up the world cannot come into being by themselves; they have their cause then, and this cause is God. "Every house is builded by some man; but He that built all things is God" (Heb. iii. 4). We see the order, the harmony, that exists in the world, we observe its fixed and unchangeable laws, the bounteous blessings existing in nature, but these things cannot exist apart from a cause. The order presupposes a mind that orders all things, the laws presuppose a lawgiver, the blessings presuppose one who gives the blessings. The order, then, the harmony, the laws, and the blessings of nature have their own cause, and this cause is God. But the greater argument for the existence of God is our conscience, which tells us that there exists a God, Who made the world, and all things that are therein, and Who will avenge the evil, and reward the good. All the nations, from the beginning until to-day, believe in God. According to

Holy Scripture, only the fool said, "There is no God:" "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God" (Ps. xiv. 1).

§ 8. Concerning God, and all that peculiarly belongs to the Nature of God.

God is a Spirit. "God is Spirit" (St. John iv. 24). Nothing material or imperfect can therefore be ascribed to Him. He is a pure and perfect Spirit. Now, as a perfect Spirit, He is, in the first place, boundless; that is, He is not restricted to any given place: "He dwelleth not in temples made with hands" (Acts xvii. 24). In the second place, He is eternal, and independent of time; He has neither beginning nor ending: "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made, Thou art God from everlasting, and world without end" (Ps. xc. 2). In the third place He is unchangeable; that is, He is not subject to changes and alterations as imperfect creatures are: "With the Lord is no variableness, nor shadow of turning" (St. James i. 18). In the fourth place, He is everywhere present, and fills all things with His presence: "In Him we live, and move, and are" (Acts xvii. 28).

§ 9. What other Attributes we ascribe to God.

God is omniscient; that is, He knows all things, both past, and present, and future, and our actions, and thoughts, and perceptions: "Lord, Thou hast proved me, and known me, Thou understandest my thoughts and my path; Thou knowest all things" (Ps. cxxxix. 1). God is all-wise, and indeed both in wisdom made and continues to direct both the world and men: "O the depth of the wisdom and riches and knowledge of God!" (Rom. xi. 33). God is all-good, full of love towards men; in His love He pities the poor and the unfortunate, He pardons all who repent, and waits till the unrepentant return to Him: "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1 John iv. 19). God is holy; in fact, He is the perfect good: "Be ye holy, because I am holy" (1 Pet. i. 16). He is just, He judges righteously, and without partiality; He rewards the good and punishes the evil: "Thou art the God that hast no pleasure in wickedness, . . . neither shall the foolish stand in Thy sight" (Ps. iv. 5, 6). God is almighty; that is, He is able to do all that He wills to do, and He wills only what is good. Now, in proof of the almighty power of God we have the creation of the world: "Our God hath done in heaven and in earth whatsoever pleased Him" (Ps. cxv. 3).

§ 10. How many Persons we discern in the Godhead.

In the Godhead we distinguish Three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these Three Persons, to Whom we pay one and the same adoration and worship, make up the Holy Trinity. The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet they are not three Gods, but one only God; the Persons are three, but the Substance one. The Father is unbegotten, the Son is begotten of the Father before all worlds, and the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father. We see the teaching concerning the Holy Trinity in the words which our Saviour spake to His disciples, when He sent them forth to preach: "Go ye, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (St. Matt. xxviii. 19).

§ 11. God is the Creator of the World.

The world, as we saw above, was not able to come into being by itself; because every effect has its cause. The Cause of the world, God, since He is perfect, has no need of anything, and therefore He did not make the world as it were by necessity, but out of His love and goodness. The matter of which the world is composed could not possibly have

been eternal; because it was impossible that the dead and lifeless matter could give *itself* existence and life. If matter were self-existent it would be eternal, and timeless—it would be manifestly God. But in His own almighty power God has no need of matter and material organisms, as man has, to enable Him to do anything; He made the world, therefore, out of nothing, through His word alone: "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast" (Ps. xxxiii. 9).

§ 12. God is the Preserver and Governor of the World.

As nothing is able to come into being without God, so nothing can possibly be preserved without Him. Only the Almighty God who made the world is able also to preserve it. But God not only preserves it, but also rules the world, and provides for it as an all-good Father. We cannot possibly dream that God Who made the world with so great goodness has left it to take its chance. If this were so, He would be cruel and unjust. God in His fatherly love directs all things, both great and small, the atoms of which it is formed, and the peoples that dwell in it. Faith in the Divine Providence makes man grateful towards God, and inspires him with hope and patience in the difficulties and distresses of life.

§ 13. God is the Creator of Man.

Holy Scripture teaches us that God, through the word of His mouth alone, created the world, that is, the heavens and the earth, the plants and the trees, the sun, the moon, and the stars, the fish, the birds, and the other different animals; but, lastly, He formed man. If all the rest of the existences cannot take their beginning from themselves, much less can man, who is the crown of the creation, the prince of all nature, the image of God: "And God made man, in the image of God made He him" (Gen. i. 27). Man does not, as all other creatures do, consist of body alone, but also of soul or spirit, through which he is shown to be above all other created existences. And his body was made of the earth, but his soul was breathed into him by the Creator: "And God made man of the dust of the earth, and breathed into his face the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (Gen. ii. 7). And on account of this special nature of man, on account of the Divine image which exists in him, man is not reckoned among mortal things, but things that are immortal. His body dies, but his soul remains immortal.*

§ 14. The Pre-determined Destiny of Man.

Man is composed, as we said, of body, and soul or spirit; and his predetermined destiny

* Concerning the immortality of the soul, see below, § 46.

is that he should develop and perfect these two things—in fact, both his body and his spirit. It is necessary that man should take care of the body, because the body is the organ of the spirit, and without the soundness of our bodies the spirit cannot be developed. We ought to value the body only so far as it is required for the development of the spirit; he who thinks only of his body comes to the materialism which teaches that the predetermined destiny of man is that we should eat and drink because to-morrow we die. The spirit, in which the true value of the man especially consists, is infinitely above the body; and for this reason we ought especially to develop and perfect it. But since our spirit includes mind, and will or heart, its development and perfecting demand that the mind also and the will should be brought to perfection. And we ought to develop the mind by diligent study and the use of books, and the will by habituating it to follow that which is good. Training and education by themselves, apart from virtue, are not only of no advantage, but are even a source of injury. On the contrary, we advance in the achievement of our predetermined destiny in proportion as we esteem and practise everything that is good and noble, and continue at all times the work of making ourselves morally perfect. The true destiny of man, then, consists in his spiritual, and, above all things, in his moral, progress towards

perfection; and so only is it possible that man should appear a true image and likeness of God—in fact, that he should become like God in wisdom and in holiness, and that he should be one with Him through love: "Ye shall therefore be perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect" (St. Matt. v. 48).

§ 15. The Fall of Man.

The first men were made by the Creator innocent and pure. They were fore-ordained to be holy and happy, of their own free will yielding obedience to the will of God. Men were created with a free will, because the value of virtue lies only in its being exercised freely, and out of love to what is good. But these men did not fulfil the destiny to which they were fore-ordained. Holy Scripture teaches us that the first created, Adam and Eve, when they were placed in Paradise, transgressed the commandment of God, and, on account of this disobedience, were expelled from Paradise; and the evil has been handed on to their descendants, in fact to the whole human race, and this has been named "original sin." And history and our daily experience teach us that men incline naturally to evil, because they worshipped idols, and were destroyed or demoralized. (Rom. iii. 13–18.)

§ 16. Sin and its Results.

Sin is the transgression of the moral law, which is to be found in Holy Scripture and in our conscience. The sinner does not act according to the direction of the moral law and his conscience, but does what his own selfishness and evil lusts demand. Sin separates us from God, robs conscience of its peace, generally brings misfortune from without, but from within always; makes us the slaves of our passions, and in the end leads us to death, bodily death and spiritual death, death in time, and death in eternity: "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. vi. 23).

Through sin the image of God in man has been obscured, but not effaced. Had the destruction of man's moral constitution been complete, he would have ceased to be man. There remains to man still the attraction to what is good, the conviction of sin, and the desire to return from sin and to repent of it. Holy Scripture confirms us when we say that the attraction for good has not abandoned man, where our Saviour says, "Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (St. Mark viii. 34).

§ 17. The Salvation of Man.

Man could not have been saved without help. History bears witness that, as the time

passed on, so the evil increased, and man was placed at greater and greater distance from God. But God, in His goodness and compassion, was not able to allow the work of His hands to perish entirely. God, Who wills that every man should have eternal life (St. John iii. 16), pitied sinful man, and sent forth the Physician of souls, Who saves man from sin, and breathes into him new powers and new life. This Divine Physician of souls, and Ransomer of men, is our Lord Jesus Christ. Christ came into the world that He might seek and save that which was lost, and might beget men anew, and reconcile them again to God, from Whom they had been separated through sin.

II. CONCERNING JESUS CHRIST.

§ 18. What the Creed says concerning Jesus Christ.

"And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, Light of light, very God of very God; begotten, not made; of one substance with the Father; by Whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father, and He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end."

§ 19. What is the Meaning of these Words?

These words teach us that, as we believe in God the Father, so we ought also to believe in the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who is the only-begotten

Son, and Word of God, and was not made out of nothing, like the rest of creation, but was begotten of His Father before all ages. He is Light of light, very God of very God. He is of one substance with the Father; as the Father is God, He, too, is manifestly God, and by Him the world was made. The Son of God came down from heaven, and took a body of the Virgin Mary through the Holy Spirit, and became perfect man, without sin, in order that He might teach men the truth, and guide them to their salvation. In the days of Pontius Pilate, the Governor of Judea, our Lord Jesus Christ was persecuted by the chief priests and scribes and Pharisees, and, having been condemned, was crucified, and suffered, and was buried, and, after three days, rose again; and, on the fortieth day after His resurrection, was received into heaven, from whence He will come again, with His divine glory and power, to judge all men, both the living and the dead. The kingdom of Jesus will have no end.

§ 20. How the World was prepared for the Coming of Jesus Christ.

The Son and Word of God became man in Jesus Christ when the fulness of time came—that is, when evil reached its full development, and men, of themselves, perceived the necessity of salvation. Evil reached its height in the time of the Emperor Augustus of Rome,

in which reign Christ was born, in the seven hundred and fiftieth year after the foundation of Rome. Jesus Christ came into the world after many ages of preparation. The Jews were prepared by God for the coming of Jesus Christ through the Patriarchs, Moses, and the Prophets, who preached to the Jews one God only, and foretold the coming of the Messiah, or Saviour; but the Gentiles, or idolaters, He prepared through many men of great reasoning power and wisdom—to wit, Socrates, Plato, and others,—who perceived the falseness of worshipping many gods, and whose minds were lifted up to the idea of one God.

§ 21. How Jesus Christ became the Saviour of the World.

Jesus Christ saved men from sin and from the deception of polytheism. Jesus became the Saviour of men, (i.) because He taught the truth, and a perfect religion; (ii.) because He lived a perfect life, and so gave us the best example of virtue and piety; and (iii.) because He died on behalf of men.

§ 22. (i.) The Teaching of Jesus Christ.

The principal heads of the teaching of Jesus Christ are as follows:—

1. God is the Creator and Father of all men, and men are His children: "Our Father, Who art in heaven" (St. Matt. vi. 9).

2. Men are united to God through love;

moreover, it is through love and not through fear that they must accomplish the divine will: "God is love, and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God in him" (1 John v. 16). God is full of mercy and compassion, and pardons that sinner who sincerely repents, and shows his repentance by his works: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort" (2 Cor. i. 3). Those who sincerely repent form one communion, the kingdom of God upon earth—that is, the Church—the members of which do the will of God, and do not desire merely to seem to be, but truly to be, just and virtuous. For this reason our Saviour teaches us that we should pray to God, and say, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, as in heaven, so upon earth" (St. Matt. vi. 10).

§ 23. (ii.) Life of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ became, secondly, the Saviour of the world through His life. Moral or religious teaching has great weight, and produces great results, when the life of the teacher is in agreement with his teaching. Now, we see this with regard to our Lord Jesus Christ, whose life exactly fulfilled all that He taught. Our Lord showed Himself the perfect example of piety and virtue. Jesus gathered all His teaching into two great commandments—love toward God, and love toward our neighbour

(St. Matt. xxii. 37–39). And these two commandments Jesus perfectly fulfilled. He lived wholly in God and God in Him (St. John x. 30). That He should at all times do the will of His Heavenly Father He deemed to be His meat (St. John iv. 34). In the end, too, He died upon the cross in order that He might fulfil the will of God (St. Matt. xxvi. 39–42). But Jesus Christ also loved His neighbour to the uttermost. Throughout His whole life He was working for the sake of men, and was always benefiting them by word or by deed; and, in the end, He gave that greater proof of His love, He openly sacrificed even His life on behalf of men (St. John xv. 13). Jesus was without sin (1 Pet. ii. 22). Even His very enemies speak of Him as true and just (St. Matt. xxii. 16). Moreover, Jesus Himself, in whom we have the perfect type of humility and love of truth, spake concerning Himself, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" (St. John viii. 46). Jesus so lived and died in order that He might leave us His life as the noblest example for our imitation, and that He might teach us how we ought to live, if we wish to be true Christians: "Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow in His steps" (1 Pet. ii. 21).

§ 24. (iii.) The Death of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ became, thirdly, the Saviour of men through His death. The death of Jesus

Christ not only set a seal upon His holy life, not only showed His boundless love toward men, but also availed as a sacrifice with God. Men, by their sins, provoked God to anger, and were separated from Him. In vain they sought to propitiate God, and to appease the Divine righteousness with sacrifices of animals and men. These sacrifices were wholly unavailing in themselves: they were simply a type and shadow of the one true sacrifice which the sinless Jesus offered, of His own free will, upon the cross, and by means of which we have been united to God, and once more reconciled to Him: "Being enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son" (Rom. v. 10). And since Jesus by His death became the Mediator between God and men and reconciled them, He is on this account called Mediator (1 Tim. ii. 5). All, then, who believe in Christ, must crucify—that is, must conquer—their passions and evil desires, that they may be dead to sin, but alive to righteousness and to God.

III. CONCERNING THE HOLY GHOST.

§ 25. What does the Creed say respecting the Holy Ghost?

"And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, Who proceedeth from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spake by the prophets."

§ 26. What do these Sayings teach us?

They teach us that, as we believe in the Father and the Son, so we ought to believe in the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. He is named the Holy Spirit, because, as the fountain of holiness, He sanctifies the faithful; Lord, because He is not the servant of the Father and the Son, but has the same Divine power. The Spirit is called the Giver of life, because through Him God gives life to all created things, and especially to men. He was not created like other creatures, but proceeds, that is, He wells forth—from the Father alone. And, being such, the Holy Spirit is worshipped and glorified with the Father and the Son. The prophets spake as they were enlightened

by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is called also, in the Holy Scripture, the Spirit of Christ (Rom. viii. 9), and abides ever in the Church with His disciples (Matt. xxviii. 20). He is the Spirit of truth and holiness Who guides Christians to do everything that is good and well-pleasing to God, proves them to be the children of God, and bestows upon them peace and happiness: "Now the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. v. 22, 23).

§ 27. Regeneration and Righteousness.

The Holy Spirit is naturally communicated to us, and through our communion with Him we are guided to a new moral life, and this life is called regeneration and justification. And this new life is through repentance and faith toward Jesus (St. Mark i. 15). Through repentance we put off the old man—that is, unrighteousness,—and put on the new man—that is, virtue. From being evil we become just. True repentance consists in recognizing evil, in being grieved on account of it, and deading it in holding steadfastly to what is good. Such true and pure repentance was shown by David, by Peter, by Zacchæus the publican, and by the prodigal son. Faith in Jesus consists in believing in Him as our Saviour, in loving Him, and exactly keeping His commandments. When we believe in Him

only, without keeping His commandments, our faith is dead: "Faith apart from works is dead" (St. James ii. 20).

§ 28. Sanctification.

A Christian must needs fight against evil at all times, and suffer in order that he may conquer it; and only thus is it possible for him to complete his regeneration and justification and to attain to holiness—that is, to his own moral perfection. He that has a living faith in Christ gradually overcomes evil, and draws near to God. But a Christian cannot possibly attain to perfection, because man is imperfect, and for this reason he tries only, and must needs try, in order that he may do what is good; nevertheless, he is never able to reach perfection.

IV. CONCERNING THE CHURCH.

§ 29. What does the Creed say concerning the Church?

"I believe in one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church."

The Church of Christ is here called one, because her Head is one only, Christ, and one only is the faith of its members—that is, faith towards Christ. She is called Holy, because she has been sanctified by Christ, and advances the holiness of Christians; she is called Catholic, because she is to be found everywhere, she preserves at all times the same teaching, and is destined to include all men; she is called Apostolic, because she was founded and settled by the Apostles.

§ 30. What is the Church?

The Church is a community of men who are bound together by the same faith in Jesus Christ, and by the same sacraments (Eph. iv. 5), and governed by canonical bishops. The Church was founded in Jerusalem in the beginning, and then spread throughout the whole world through the teaching of the

Apostles and their successors. She endured many and dreadful persecutions, and countless numbers of Christians were barbarously tortured, and died on behalf of their faith, and so were called Martyrs. In the end, the Church gained her freedom in the reign of Constantine the Great, in the year 313. There arose in the Church many heretics—that is, persons who taught false and strange doctrines opposed to the genuine teaching of the Church. Against these heretics were summoned what are called General Councils, which condemned the heresies, and settled the doctrines of the Church. And then schisms took place in the Church. Thus, in the ninth century, there arose the schism between the Eastern and the Western Church, provoked by the popes, who, because of their own haughty pride, desired to become masters of the whole Church; and in the sixteenth century arose the schism between the Western and the Protestant Church. But the true, one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, which is designated by the Creed, is our orthodox Eastern Church; because, whereas the Western and the Protestant Churches have in many things perverted the Christian doctrine, our Church has kept it holy and pure, as the Apostles delivered it. Now, the Eastern orthodox Church includes within her limits three very important Churches: the Church in Turkey, the Church in Greece, and the Church in Russia. The Church in Turkey is governed

by the Patriarch of Constantinople; and the remaining three Patriarchs are those of Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem: but the Church in Greece is governed by a synod of bishops, which sits at Athens; and that in Russia is governed by an equal number of bishops and priests, which synod sits in St. Petersburg.

§ 31. The Church Advances the Holiness of the Faithful.

The Church has been founded, in order that she may follow up the work of salvation accomplished by Jesus Christ; that she may plainly by degrees lead all men to Christ, and teach them that they should live a life in accordance with His teaching. And this aim the Church pursues in a threefold manner; that is, through the teaching of the gospel, through Prayer, and through Sacraments.

§ 32.

The Church effects the sanctification, or, in other words, the moral progress, of the faithful, firstly, through the preaching or teaching of the gospel. In the gospel are truly found the "Words of eternal life" (St. John vi. 68). A man must hear in order to believe, and there must be a preacher in order that he may hear: "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. x. 17).

By means of preaching the Apostles and their successors disseminated the gospel, and up to this day it is being preached to the heathen. Our Lord gave His disciples a charge that they should preach the gospel to all the nations (St. Matt. xxviii. 19). In the early Church the preaching of the gospel was always a part of each service. By the teaching of the gospel in the Church, in the school, and in the home, men are guarded from indifference to, and hatred of religion, and from many errors and superstitions.

§ 33. Concerning Prayer.

A second means of regeneration or moral progress in Christians the Church has in Prayer. Prayer is the lifting up of the heart to the Creator, the communing of the soul with God. The pious man perceives the necessity of expressing his sentiments towards God, just as man in general perceives the necessity of expressing every sentiment, whether of joy or pain. Prayer strengthens the religious sentiment, cleanses the soul, lifts it up, and causes it to draw near to God. Now, man prays either that he may express repentance toward God, or that he may give God thanks for His blessings, and extol His greatness, or that he may ask somewhat from God. We pray, and we rightly pray, properly speaking, to God alone. And if we pray also to the saints and the Mother of God, we do

this, not because we would make gods of them, but in order that we may use them as mediators with God, Whose friends they became through their holy lives. "Watch and pray" (St. Matt. xxvi. 41).

§ 34. In What Manner we ought to Pray.

We must pray, firstly, with a pure heart. God does not hear the prayer of him who nourishes in his heart hatred and enmity toward his neighbour (St. Matt. v. 23, 24). Secondly, we must pray with a firm conviction that God can and will hear our prayers, and knows far better than we do of what things we have need: therefore we must pray that God's will, not ours, may be done: "Thy will be done" (St. Matt. vi. 10). Thirdly, we must pray sincerely, and not merely for pretence, as the Pharisees did (St. Matt. vi. 7).

§ 35. Where and When we ought to Pray.

We ought to pray everywhere, because God as a Spirit is everywhere present (St. John iv. 24). Only, in addition to our prayer in private, or at home, we pray together in recognized sacred places set apart, in the Churches; and this is called Common Prayer or Worship. "Bless ye God in the congregations" (Ps. lxviii. 26). The Common Prayer is very profitable. First, because the adornment of the Church, the images, of course,

and all the other sacred accessories, the hymns that are sung, and the prayers, arouse our religious sentiment, and inspire us with a greater readiness to pray. Secondly, because we see others pray, and are encouraged by their example to pray also ourselves. Thirdly, because when we pray to the same common Father in heaven we recollect that we are all His children, equal together, brethren one to another, and bound to love one another. And, fourthly, it is in the Church that the priest takes the opportunity to explain to us the Divine truths of the gospel. We may pray equally at all times, as often as we perceive the necessity of prayer; but it is good and profitable that we should pray at home at fixed hours, and in the Churches on fixed days, because the fixed hours and days of prayer keep us in mind of the duty of prayer, which, were it not for this custom, we might easily forget.

§ 36. The Lord's Prayer.

Our Lord, desiring to teach His disciples how they ought to pray, gave to them the best form of prayer, the "Our Father." Now, the Lord's Prayer is as follows:—

"Our Father, Which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

In this prayer of our Lord we call upon God as our Father, and thus we are taught that we ought to pray with our heart full of love, both to God as our Father, and to our neighbour as our brother. God is said to be in heaven, not because He is confined to any fixed place, but that His greatness and His power might be shown, and that thus we should pray to Him with faith that He is able to hear our prayer. In the words "Hallowed be Thy Name" we are taught that it is our duty to worship God as holy with a pure heart, and by means of good works. When we say "Thy kingdom come," we pray that the kingdom of God may be unfolded to men, and prevail in their hearts—that is, the gospel, by which men are taught that they should do the will of God upon the earth, as the angels do it in heaven: "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so upon earth." We next call upon God to help us to obtain our daily bread—that is, all the necessaries of life; to forgive our debts—that is, our sins—as we forgive the sins of others; to guard us from every temptation—that is, from every impulse towards evil; and to save us from evil—that is, from sin.

§ 37. Concerning Sacraments.

"I acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins." And through Baptism and the other Sacraments the Church supplies the Divine grace, and effects the regeneration and sanctification of Christians. Now, the Sacraments are sacred rites, which have been ordained by Jesus Christ and His Apostles, and in which, under visible signs, the invisible grace of the Holy Spirit is communicated to Christians. The Sacraments also serve as outward signs and tokens through which Christians are distinguished from those who follow other religions. The Sacraments are seven in number—to wit, Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Repentance, Confession, Priesthood, Marriage, and Unction. The most essential of the seven are Baptism and the Eucharist, because by Baptism we become members of the Church, and by the Eucharist we are made one with Christ. And of the other Sacraments Confirmation and Confession are Sacraments binding upon every Christian; but Priesthood, Marriage, and Unction are matters of choice.

§ 38. Baptism.

Baptism is a Sacrament in which we believe that, as the body is cleansed by means of water, so the soul is cleansed from original

sin through the grace of the Holy Spirit. This Sacrament our Saviour Himself ordained, when He sent forth His disciples to preach, and said to them, "Go ye and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (St. Matt. xxviii. 19). He who is being baptized is dipped thrice in the water by the priest, and this trine immersion is a figure of the three days' burial of our Saviour, and His resurrection. It shows especially that we must die with Christ to sin, in order that we may be raised with Him to a new Christian life (Rom. vi. 4). He that is baptized ought first to confess his faith, and then to be baptized (St. Mark xvi. 16). For this reason in the early times of the Church, those who were about to become Christians were examined first, and then baptized. But when, afterwards, the custom of infant Baptism prevailed, sureties were appointed by the Church, who, as guardians of the infants, repeat the articles of faith, and undertake the duty of teaching, and, of course, catechizing the baptized infants, when they reach an age when they can understand.

§ 39. The Chrism.

The Chrism, or holy oil, is a Sacrament in which the priest, anointing the baptized with oil, invokes upon him the grace of the Holy

Spirit. The Apostles laid their hands upon the baptized, and invoked upon them the grace of the Holy Spirit; but their successors not only lay their hands upon the baptized, but also anoint them with oil. The anointing priest uses these words, "The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit. Amen." In fact, this Sacrament serves as the seal and confirmation with regard to the gift of the Holy Spirit, which the anointed received in Baptism, in order that he might advance to every good work. The Chrism was formerly united with Baptism, and carried out immediately after it.

§ 40. The Eucharist.

The Eucharist is a Sacrament in which, by partaking of the bread and of the wine, we partake of the very body and blood of Christ. This mystery our Lord instituted when He ate for the last time with His own disciples at the mystical supper. Holy Scripture says that "the Lord, in the same night that He was betrayed, took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is My body, which is broken for you: do this for My memorial. Likewise He took the cup also, and said, This cup is the New Testament in My blood; do this, as often as ye drink it for My memorial. Because as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do proclaim the Lord's death" (1 Cor. xi. 23–26). Great is the

mystery of the Eucharist, because it represents the death and sacrifice of Jesus on the cross on our behalf, and by it we are made one with Jesus (St. John vi. 56). A Christian, before receiving the Sacrament, ought first to examine his conscience, and if he perceives that his conscience is undefiled, then let him come to the Holy Eucharist; but if not, let him forbear to come, because he who partakes unworthily is guilty of sin. For this reason the Church ordained the Sacrament of Repentance, which ought to precede the Eucharist.

§ 41. Repentance.

Repentance, or Confession, is a Sacrament in which the Christian makes full confession of his sins in the presence of a spiritual person, and, on sincere repentance, receives at his hands the forgiveness of those sins from God. Confession is enjoined in Holy Scripture: "Confess your sins one to another, and pray for one another, in order that ye may be healed" (St. James v. 16). In order that a Christian may receive forgiveness, it is necessary that he should sincerely repent—that is, that he should confess his sins,—that he should experience heartfelt sorrow for them, and that he should declare that he will not return to them. If necessary, the spiritual person imposes spiritual penalties, when the sins are great, and forgives them, when they

are small, and gives his counsel to the penitent, comforting him, and encouraging him to a better life.

§ 42. Priesthood.

Priesthood is a Sacrament in which the Bishop lays his hands upon him who is chosen, invokes upon him the Divine grace, and imparts to him the grace of the priesthood. Priesthood, established by our Lord Jesus Christ, had its beginning from the Apostles. The orders of the sacred ministry are three: that of the Bishop, that of the Priest, and that of the Deacon. The office of the Priest is to preach the Divine word, to celebrate the Sacraments, and perform the ceremonies, and to feed his spiritual flock. The priest should be trained in order that he may preach the Divine word, and virtuous in his life, in order that his teaching may bear fruit (1 Tim. iv. 12).

§ 43. Marriage.

Marriage is a Sacrament in which the priest invokes the Divine grace upon two persons who come together to be united in marriage. Holy Scripture represents marriage as according to the will of God, and a sacred bond. For this reason the Church always blesses marriage. Through marriage mutual assistance is afforded to those who are united, the

human race is preserved and increases, it expands in a righteous manner, and is brought to perfection. For, were there no home, the bringing up of the children would be impossible. Lawful marriage is between one man only and one woman only. The married ought to have mutual faith in each other and esteem for each other, in order that they may take care that their children are well brought up, inspiring them meanwhile by their own words, and most of all by their example, with love toward God and their neighbour, and everything that is good and noble.

§ 44. Unction.

Unction is a Sacrament in which the priest anoints the sick with oil, and invokes upon him the Divine grace for the healing both of the body and of the soul. The Apostles used to perform this mystery, anointing the sick with oil, and curing them in the name of the Lord. Concerning this Sacrament St. James says, "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the Church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he hath committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (St. James v. 14, 15).

V. CONCERNING THE LIFE THAT IS TO COME.

§ 45. What does the Creed say concerning the Life that is to come?

"I look for the Resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come."

Through these last sentences of our Creed we are taught that there is a life to come in which the dead will be raised, in order that they, too, as well as the living, may give an account of their own deeds. Our Lord said, "The hour cometh, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of God, . . . and shall go forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment" (St. John v. 25, 29). And the Apostle Paul says, "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so also them which have fallen asleep through Jesus will God bring with Him" (1 Thess. iv. 14). The same Apostle says that a spiritual body will be raised (1 Cor. xv. 44). Man was made, as we saw elsewhere, in the image and likeness of God; he does not consist only of the body which dies, but of a soul which remains

immortal, and passes on into eternal life. "God created man to be immortal" (Wis. Sol. ii. 23). In this life that is to come men will be rewarded or punished, according to the good or evil deeds that they have done. "God will render to each man according to his works" (Rom. ii. 6). Our Lord, describing the future life, says that all men will be gathered together in the sight of God, Who will separate the just from the unjust, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats: and the just He will put on His right hand, and the unjust on His left hand. And to the just He will say, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit eternal life; because I was hungry, and ye gave Me to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me to drink; I was naked, and ye clothed Me; I was a stranger, and ye took Me in; I was sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me; whatsoever ye did to the poor, ye did to Me." And to the unrighteous He will say, "Depart from Me, ye cursed, into eternal punishment; because I was hungry, and ye gave Me not to eat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me not to drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in; I was sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not." "And these (the unrighteous) shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous unto eternal life" (St. Matt. xxv. 41, etc.).

§ 46. We have Proofs of the Existence of a Life to come, and of the Immortality of the Soul.

All we men perceive that there is one power within us, which is different from the body—a power which remains unchanged, while our body is being completely changed; a power which reflects, thinks, and acts freely. 1. Now, since material things are not unchangeable, neither are they endowed with a free mind and will, the power that exists within us—that is, the soul—cannot be a body, or anything material; and it follows that it is immaterial, and for this reason incorruptible and immortal. 2. All men perceive that righteousness ought to be rewarded and unrighteousness punished, because when we observe that one good deed is not rewarded, and one evil deed is not punished, we are grieved and vexed. Nevertheless the good do not always receive their reward or enjoy happiness while on this earth, nor are evil men always punished and unfortunate in this life; from which we conclude absolutely that there is a life to come in which righteousness will be rewarded and unrighteousness punished. 3. All men have been made by the Creator such that we are not contented with what is mortal only and belongs to time, but we strive after what is incorruptible and eternal, and long for it; and of all creatures that exist we

men alone love God, Who is eternal. But God would be cruel and unjust, were He to breathe into us such noble longings, if they are to remain continually unfulfilled,—such love towards the eternal God, except eternal life exists. All nations and peoples in every age and place have believed, and do believe, in the existence of a life to come; that the soul is not brought to an end after death, but follows out its existence. If men had invented this faith, then, it would not have been so universal; because that which is the invention of man exists at a stated epoch and a stated place, and not everywhere, and at all times. Man, then, is born with faith in the immortality of the soul, and this because his soul is truly immortal.

PART II.

MORAL.

§ 47. The Decalogue.

As in the Creed we are taught what we ought to believe, so in the moral law, or the Ten Commandments, we are taught what we ought to do; because our faith is only a true and living faith when we not only accept the truths which it teaches us, but also act in accordance with our faith: "For as the body apart from the Spirit is dead, so faith apart from works is dead" (St. James ii. 26). The Decalogue, which has been so named because it contains ten commandments, was given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai, and is as follows:—

1. I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt not have any other gods except Me.
2. Make no idols, nor bow down to them, nor worship them.
3. Make no irreverent use of the name of God.
4. Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day.

5. Honour thy father and thy mother.

6. Thou shalt do no murder.

7. Thou shalt not profane the sanctity of marriage.

8. Thou shalt not steal.

9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

10. Do not covet what belongs to thy neighbour.

The Decalogue is divided into two parts, of which the first includes the first four commandments, and teaches our duty towards God; and the second includes the six last commandments, and teaches our duty towards our neighbour. Jesus included the Decalogue in two injunctions—the injunction to love God, and the injunction to love our neighbour (St. Matt. xxvii. 37–40). He brought the Decalogue to perfection: first, because He taught us that we are not to keep the commandments from fear of punishment or from hope of reward, but from love to what is good and repugnance to evil; secondly, because He taught us that good does not consist only in good works that are apparent to the world, but in those good dispositions of the heart from which good works proceed; and, thirdly, because He taught that the commandments not only forbid us to do evil, but also enjoin upon us to do good.

§ 48. Love toward God and Love toward our Neighbour, or the Moral Law, is natural to us.

Our Lord, as we said, reduced the Decalogue to two commandments, the duty of love toward God and the duty of love toward our neighbour; and these two commandments form what is called the Moral Law. The moral law, as fulfilled and perfected by our Saviour, is not a mere human invention, but God has given it a place in the heart of every man; we are born with it; in fact, it is implanted in us. There exists within us a certain power which is called Conscience, and by means of which we discern good from evil, and righteousness from unrighteousness, and truth from falsehood. All men, and all nations, in all places, and at all times, have regarded good as good, and evil as evil. What the moral law encourages or forbids, the conscience also encourages or forbids. And our conscience, just like the moral law, tells us that, not only ought we not to do our neighbour any hurt or injury, but also that we ought to be kind to him and give him help. The moral law, then, exists within us: and, for this reason, the Apostle Paul says that the nations which have not the law do by nature the things contained in the law, and speaks of the moral law as written in the hearts of men (Rom. ii. 14, 15).

§ 49. The First Commandment.

"I am the Lord thy God; thou shalt not have any other Gods except Me."

This commandment teaches us that we must confess our belief in, and honour one God only, and not many. This commandment is the foundation of all the commandments; for any one who honours and loves God cannot fail to keep the rest of the commandments, and he who does not love and honour God certainly transgresses the rest of the commandments. Now, we honour God and confess Him (1) when we believe sincerely and from our hearts that He alone exists (as God) and none else; (2) when we fear Him as the avenger of what is evil—nevertheless this fear should not be a slavish fear, but should proceed from a natural reverence for the holy will of God; (3) when we love Him, and show by our works the love that we have for Him; (4) when we hope in Him and have confidence in His Divine help and Providence. They who transgress this First Commandment are (1) the atheists, who deny God; (2) polytheists and idolaters, who believe in many false gods; (3) magicians, who hope or promise to do impossible things, muttering certain mysterious phrases, or invoking the assistance of evil spirits; (4) superstitious or presumptuous persons, who distort the idea of God, and their religion, and make their

good or ill fortune depend upon matters of chance and insignificance; and (5) persons who have fixed their hopes, not upon God, but upon material things, or upon men. We do not transgress this commandment when we honour the saints; because we do not make them like gods, nor do we worship them as gods, but we simply call upon them to act as mediators with God on our behalf.

§ 50. The Second Commandment.

"Make no idols, nor bow down to them, nor worship them."

This commandment completes the first commandment, and forbids idolatry. Now idolatry consists in paying worship to idols—that is, to images and representations of the false gods. Those who transgress this commandment are (1) the nations, or idolaters, except the Jews and Mohammedans, all the rest are idolaters; (2) all Christians who worship images, and make gods of them, which images serve only to keep us in mind of holy and sacred persons, for which reason alone we ought to honour them and bow down to them, but not to worship them, and regard them as gods; and (3) those who are worshippers of themselves—for example, the vainglorious, the covetous, and those in general who worship material blessings, their own passions, and the various evil lusts.

§ 51. The Third Commandment.

"Do not use the name of God irreverently."

This commandment forbids us to make any evil use of the name of God. We make an evil use of the name of God (1) when we use the name of God without reason in our daily conversation; (2) when we curse—that is, when we pray for some evil to come upon ourselves or others, calling upon the name of God; (3) when we blaspheme, or revile the name of God; when we commit perjury, or forswear ourselves—that is, when we call upon the name of God as witness that we will speak the truth and will keep our promise, when nevertheless we speak what is false, and are not true to our promise. He who commits perjury or swears a false oath is guilty of irreverence towards God, because he shows that he does not believe in Him, neither does he fear Him; and, moreover, he wrongs his fellow-men, for through his false witness it very often happens that the innocent is condemned and the guilty is acquitted: for this reason the government punishes perjury and false swearing. There is, however, an oath that is lawful and sacred, the oath which we take before the state with a view to the elucidation of what is just and true. This commandment, which forbids us to make an evil use of the name of God, urges the necessity of making a good use of it, and of calling upon the name of God in the troubles of life, and in our prayers.

§ 52. The Fourth Commandment.

"Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day."

This commandment teaches us that it is our duty to consecrate one day in the week to the worship of God, Who has given us our existence and life, and all our blessings. The Jews had held consecrated to the service of God the Sabbath, which commemorated the rest of God from the creation of the world. But instead of the Sabbath, Christians keep the Lord's Day in memory of the resurrection of the Lord. And besides the Lord's Day we have other feast days, which bear upon the life of the Saviour, or the Mother of God, or the saints and martyrs. Our duty as regards these feasts is as follows: We ought to go to church and listen with reverence and attention to the prayers, the hymns, and the teaching of the gospel. In addition to this, all who are educated ought to read some religious or moral book, and do as much as in them lies to benefit their neighbour. If we abstain from work on these feast days, we do not do this because work is an evil or forbidden thing, but in order that we may have an opportunity to fulfil our religious duties, and in order that both soul and body may not be destroyed by ceaseless work. For this reason, when there is any necessity, and for any philanthropic purpose, we are enjoined to work on the feast days. Our Lord said that, "the Sabbath was

made for man, and not man for the Sabbath," and that before all things we keep holy the feasts by means of good works: "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice" (Matt. xii. 7). They who transgress this commandment are they who without reasonable excuse are absent from Church on the feast days, all who do not do whatever they can for their neighbour, all who without any necessity, or from greed of gain, work on the Sabbath, and all who, instead of taking their pleasure in moderation, and in accordance with the moral law, give themselves up to pleasures and delights which are intemperate and unholy.

§ 53. The Fifth Commandment.

"Honour thy father and thy mother."

This commandment enjoins upon us to honour our parents. Now, we honour our parents not only when we do not despise them and provoke them to anger, either by our words or our deeds, but as well when we obey them, and reverence them, when we love them and succour them in their misfortunes, and especially in their old age. We must do thus for our parents, because, next to God, our parents are our greatest benefactors: "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord" (Col. iii. 20). In like manner we owe love and reverence to our tutors, guardians, and teachers;

to the clergy, and to the rulers of the State: because all these are in many ways our benefactors and protectors. Tutors and guardians supply the place of our parents; our teachers develop our intellect and our heart; the clergy have a care to our religious and moral constitution; and the heads of the Government, by means of the laws, protect and assure our life, honour, and property.

§ 54. The Sixth Commandment.

"Do not kill."

This commandment enjoins upon us not to take away the life of our neighbour. The murderer is guilty of impiety towards God, because he assaults His image which exists in every man, and because he takes away that most precious of all blessings, life, which God gave, and which God alone has the right to take away. For this reason the man who commits suicide is also guilty of irreverence towards God—that is, he who takes away his own life, either intentionally by violence, or unintentionally by neglecting his health, or living a prodigal life. Killing is only lawful at such times when we go to war, for the purpose of protecting the violated rights of our native country. This commandment does not only forbid murder, but also the evil disposition of mind which leads to murder—that is, anger and hatred. This commandment

equally forbids spiritual murder, which consists in deceiving and inflicting moral injury upon another, either through our bad example or our evil words. This commandment enjoins especially upon children that they should not grieve their parents by their evil deeds, because, by so doing, they gradually destroy the lives of their parents. So far from killing his neighbour, a Christian is bound to succour him, and to protect him in time of need.

§ 55. The Seventh Commandment.

"Do not profane the sanctity of marriage."

Marriage, as we have seen, is a sacred bond, and the will of God. On marriage depends the weal of the individual and the community. Now, marriage is confirmed by the mutual love and trust of the husband and the wife. For this reason this commandment enjoins upon us to reverence marriage as sacred, and not to give any occasion to weaken the mutual love and confidence of the husband and the wife in each other; because in such a way we impair the relationship without which it is not possible for union to exist. This commandment in general includes the duty of prudence and sobriety, and warns us against excess and licentiousness. We must hold in esteem the virtues of prudence and sobriety, because by these virtues we maintain our health both of

body and soul, and our physical and moral happiness. It is our duty to flee from excess and licentiousness, because through these evils we lose our health and our honour, we injure our reputation, and we fall into the worst misfortunes, as we are taught by that most beautiful parable of the "Prodigal Son."

§ 56. The Eighth Commandment.

"Thou shalt not steal."

This commandment teaches us that we must not take away what is the possession of another; because property is a very precious possession, without which it is impossible for a man to live and develop. Now, they who transgress this commandment are not only all who, either secretly, or openly and by violence, steal and rob one another, but all who cause injury to one another in general, of whatever kind soever, either by deception, by false measures or weights, or by overestimating the value of merchandise, either by false promises, false statements as to debts, or such-like. This commandment teaches us not only to reverence what belongs to others, but also our own; to hold in esteem industry and thrift, by which we guard against fraud; to avoid idleness, covetousness, and prodigal habits, which are incentives to dishonesty. A Christian must not only avoid doing injury and injustice to another, but must give

assistance to the needy and the unfortunate, in accordance with the demands for Christian love.

§ 57. The Ninth Commandment.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour."

Honour and a good name are most valuable possessions, which this commandment enjoins upon us to reverence and to keep safe from injury. This commandment forbids (1) all falsehood spoken against others, either in a court of justice or anywhere else. Through falsehood we offend God, Who is truth itself, and we show towards our neighbour a crafty and malicious disposition, because the fact of our distorting the truth shows that we have a desire to injure our neighbour. This commandment forbids us (2) to accuse our neighbour, to lend a ready ear to charges made against him; that we should circulate against him evil suspicions either thoughtlessly, or from malice on our part; or that we should pass severe and ungentle judgments upon the failings of others. This commandment enjoins upon us to protect the good name of another, to speak the truth at all times, to avoid accusations, and to be charitable in judging of the failings of others.

§ 58. The Tenth Commandment.

The Tenth Commandment forbids every evil desire, because it is from evil desire that every evil takes its rise. The cause of evil is within us: "From the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (St. Matt. xv. 19). When evil thoughts prevail within us, then we become slaves to our evil thoughts, and do that which they force upon us, and not that which our conscience and the moral law wills that we shall do. For this reason this last commandment, with the intention of anticipating every evil, seeks to draw away from our hearts the root of the evil, namely, the evil thoughts. We ought, then, at all times, to take pains to overcome every evil thought, and to this end to ask the help of God by fervent faith and prayer: "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak" (St. Matt. xxvi. 41).

THE END.

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